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Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks

INSIDE
TRACKS

The Newsletter of Region One

Volume 9, No. 2, 1999

Special Edition

FWP Outlines Position on Natural Resource Use

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Mission and Goals Statement, published in a recent edition of *Montana Outdoors* magazine, makes several important points:

- Provide stewardship of and quality opportunities to enjoy Montana's fish, wildlife and parks resources while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations;
- Emphasize education, communication and responsible behavior regarding fish, wildlife and parks resources.

We have received a number of requests to explain in more detail our guidelines for managing our state's wildlife heritage. Here in northwest

Montana's Region One, FWP has been working with our Citizen Advisory Committee to outline more fully the

principles under which we operate to manage the fish, wildlife, and parks resources in northwest Montana.

FWP Region One's Nine Management Principles:

→ **1. Humans are an important part of the ecosystem:** All people are natural resource users. Some activities involve the active use of resources (hunting, fishing, trapping), while some activities involve passive use (bird watching, hiking, park visitation). Both active and passive natural resource uses affect the resource;

→ **2. The responsible use of biologically renewable natural resources benefits people.**

The responsible stewardship and use of these resources allows for sustained yield of timber, rangelands, fish, wildlife, scenery, and landscapes. **Sustained yield** refers to ethical human use of renewable resources over the long run. **Responsible practices** are defined as those which sustain the use of resources without affecting their long-term productivity and quality. This can also be referred to as "keeping all the parts," or maintaining healthy habitats and systems. Using natural resources responsibly is important for our society, part of our heritage, and integral to our lifestyle and environment;

→ **3. A combination of biological principles and social principles set levels of natural resource harvest.** Upper and lower limits of natural resource harvest are set by biological constraints, but actual harvest levels within those limits are set by social desires.

→ **4. Natural resource uses (hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife viewing, boating, hiking, park visitation) are positive activities for young people and families.** Nationwide studies show that hunting and fishing are important family values in our society. For example, primary reasons for hunting are to spend time with family and friends, obtain wild meat, and to experience nature.

→ **5. Open space and public access are key components of our natural resource use heritage.** Responsible timber, range, and agriculture management maintain open space; subdivisions shrink open space. Cooperation with private timberland managers, both small and large, is very important in maintaining open space in northwest Montana; (Cont. on Page 2)



FAMILY AFFAIR. Nationwide studies show that hunting is an important family value. Mother and daughter demonstrate that here.

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FOREST EXPO SHOWS RESPONSIBLE FOREST USES

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FWP Outlines Position on Natural Resource Use

(Cont. from Page 1)

► **6. The sustainable use of renewable natural resources is environmentally friendly.** These resources are biologically renewable, and their responsible use is compatible with long term sustainability of the environment.

► **7. People who responsibly use renewable natural resources value those resources and support their conservation.** For example, hunters typically develop a close tie to the animals they pursue and form foundations for the conservation of those species. The use of these resources fosters support (a "care base") for their protection.

► **8. Hunters, anglers, trappers, loggers, and other resource users must maintain the highest ethical standards.** We must show both sides of the natural resource use issue; bad

practices in the past must be acknowledged, and any breach of responsible resource use should be pointed out immediately. Agencies and users should actively promote improved practices. We must all continue to "clean up our act." We must set a good example, building on the advantage of personal contacts in our community;



RESPONSIBLE HUNTERS, trappers, and anglers develop close ties to the animals they pursue.

most people know hunters, trappers, anglers, birdwatchers, wildlife advocates, loggers, and ranchers. If they see their neighbors using responsible practices, they will be more likely to accept the resource use activity.

► **9. We acknowledge other positions, but we need not be timid in our support of responsible natural resource uses.** We ask people to respect our position; in turn, we must show that we respect other positions, as outlined in FWP goal statements. We may not develop consensus, but we can increase support, understanding, and consent.

To more fully explore the views of northwest Montanans on biologically renewable natural resource uses and the above principles, an independent research firm has conducted an intensive public survey. Look for the results of the survey in the summer issue of 'Inside Tracks.'

Thompson/Fisher Agreement Could Make History

The Thompson and Fisher river drainages are among the most popular areas for hunting and fishing in northwest Montana. And with the proposed Thompson-Fisher land agreement, the largest of its kind in Montana's history, this area may be included in an easement that ensures this heritage for future generations.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Plum Creek Timber Company, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation are working together on a pact which would maintain traditional open

space and public access to as much as 170,000 acres of Plum Creek timberland. Among other values, Project Biologist Gael Bissell notes that these lands make up some of the finest winter range for wildlife in northwest Montana and contain some of the area's most important fisheries.

Governor Marc Racicot, in a letter to Plum Creek Timber, underscored the importance of making certain these lands remain in Montana's public open spaces. "Indeed," he wrote, "some of my special childhood memories growing up in Libby, were the times spent with my father and brothers fishing the Thompson River. Dad taught us to fish along that river."

The Elk Foundation is facilitating the process in which Plum Creek would sell its development rights to FWP, maintaining the custom and tradition of public use in the area. As part of the pact, Plum Creek would retain actual ownership of the land and the timber management rights.

The agreement would involve up

to 96,000 acres in the Thompson River drainage and as much as 73,000 acres in the Fisher River drainage (see map). According to FWP Director Pat Graham, the Thompson-Fisher area is FWP's highest priority Plum Creek land project in northwest Montana.

Art Vail, Flathead Unit Manager for Plum Creek, says the agreement would be a positive step. "Plum Creek would like to see this area remain in our timber base, and we recognize the high recreational and environmental value of the Fisher and Thompson."

FWP's Region One Supervisor Dan Vincent agrees, considering this the most important and far-reaching project he's seen during his 25 years as a natural resource manager. Vincent says that the cooperators are working on land value appraisals and will continue negotiations on the proposed agreement over the summer and fall.

Mitigation Coordinator Alan Wood notes that Libby and Hungry Horse reservoir mitigation could be a source of dollars to help purchase the easement.



THE FISHER RIVER bottom and surrounding forest lands are representative of the important fish and wildlife habitats involved in the Thompson-Fisher Land Agreement.

Bud Moore Walks the Talk for Responsible Land Management

Bud Moore is a well-known figure in natural resource circles. He is respected as a hunter, trapper, land manager, conservationist, and author of the landmark book, "The Lochsa Story."

After a long career as a land manager in the U. S. Forest Service, Bud now manages two tracts of land in western Montana to demonstrate sustainable land and wildlife stewardship. He calls those parcels his "Coyote Forest." On the Coyote Forest, Bud practices "ecosystem management," which is, he says, simply keeping the land whole while drawing sustenance from it.

In doing so, he is considered one of the unheralded fathers of ecosystem management. He says that by 1980 he pulled together most of the concepts now classified under ecosystem management and has employed them on his land for several decades.

"Ecosystem management is billed as new stuff," Bud says, "but the Forest Service oldtimers I learned under were pretty close to it. I'm not sure they understood it in modern terms, but they were close to the land and understood the connections."

Bud practices his view of ecosystem management, which he describes simply as "keeping all the parts" on his 80-acre tract nestled between the Mission and Swan mountain ranges near Condon, and another 167 acres near Ovando. The centerpiece of Bud's management area is a small family-operated sawmill. "We run a light-on-the-land logging show," he says. About half of the logs for the sawmill come from Bud's land, and the other half from neighbors' land.

"For sustainability, we have to have some income from the land," he says. "You'd need to be sitting on a pile of money to be able to just own land without working it."

Bud says that on their land he demonstrates sustained yield and an even flow of timber on a mini-scale. "We grow a lot of timber and provide a lot of wildlife habitat at the same time," he says. "It seems to be working. For example, last year I watched a grizzly sow and two cubs feeding on bearberry for about an hour



SHOWING HOW IT WORKS. Bud Moore runs a sustainable small logging operation on his "Coyote Forest," where he demonstrates the compatibility of responsible natural resource use and wildlife management.

near the edge of our property." Bud adds that he and others also enjoy the bounty of venison harvested from his land.

Viewing his land as part of the whole is important, Bud notes. He manages his area as a wildlife-friendly corridor for movement of species like the grizzly between the Missions and the Swans.

Bud leaves untouched a portion of his land. "You don't have to have wilderness to have wild places," he says. "You can have little pieces of wilderness even around your home." In this wild area Bud and his wife, Janet, have seen elk, moose, mountain lion and bear. "We have everything on our land that ever existed in the Swan Valley, as far as we know. And we're going to keep it that way."

Larger land managers could benefit by faithfully practicing these ecosystem management principles on their land, Bud says. "One of the big problems in larger ownerships is the pace—so much from the land in a short time. You need an even flow of products, and you need to avoid hitting drainages too hard. It's a matter of volume and pace more than the type of practices."

Bud has helped forge a coalition of varied interests in the Swan Valley to work for responsible forest stewardship, especially since a timber shortfall has become obvious. He has been a major team player in the Swan Citizens Adhoc Group. His purpose there has been to join all the interests in the valley to make the transition to lesser dependence on a timber economy. "We have something good to work with in this valley," he

says. "I won't spend any of my energy or money on actions which will further polarize our communities."

In Bud's book, "The Lochsa Story," he traces the history of humankind's relationship to the Lochsa country, and draws from it lessons of land management that could be applied anywhere. In the book, Bud ties together what he's learned from a lifetime of practicing and thinking about land stewardship.

In the book's final chapters, Bud takes a new look at conservation and multiple use. He points out the flaws in viewing forests simply as producers of commodities. "Protecting or enhancing the factors that keep the land whole deserves first priority in management," he writes. "A variety of ways to use the land and its values, without detracting from management's first priority of wholeness, will surface in turn."

Not only has Bud clearly articulated his points, he has truly walked the talk. Bud's sustainable land management experiment, the Coyote Forest, is a rare example of illustrating complicated principles on the ground for everyone to see.

To sign out a copy of a four-part radio series featuring Bud Moore, contact the FWP office at 752-5501. Bud did the interviews as part of the Land and Wildlife Heritage series featured on "Northwest Outdoors," FWP's 20-minute weekly radio show. The series continues through the summer on Thursdays, 8:35 a.m. and 7:05 p.m. on KGEZ radio, 600 on your AM dial. The June series features Conservationist Bob Love and Sustainability Advocate Lex Blood.

Homesite Development and Domestic Dogs Crowd Whitetail Deer Range

by FWP Wildlife Biologist Carolyn Sime

Dogs are thought to be the oldest of all domesticated animals. Domesticated dogs appear in the fossil records as far back as 10,000 - 11,000 years ago. Dogs were domesticated to serve human purposes for a variety of reasons, including protection, hunting, working of livestock, and companionship. Despite our best efforts at domestication, dogs have still retained some of their basic instincts, particularly the urge to chase that which runs — whether it be cats, squirrels, rabbits, or deer.

Our rural landscapes in northwest Montana have seen unprecedented growth and development in recent years. Rural areas have been subdivided and developed for home site and hobby farms. The impacts of that rural subdivision on wildlife and wildlife habitat are often only considered at the project scale rather than in the greater context of the landscape, but those impacts extend well beyond the boundaries of the actual development site. In the context of domestic dogs who are known to travel 3-5 miles from home, the impact radius could be significant.

We have found that off-site impacts to wintering white-tail deer increase as the number of home sites increases. Between 1988-97, white-tail deer were systematically surveyed on public land using remotely-triggered cameras. Incidental photographs of free-ranging dogs were also taken,

starting in 1991. These photographs were studied for uniqueness of individual dog, presence of collar, date/time, location, and number of individuals in the picture. Since these dogs appeared to have a home, we hypothesized that the number of septic permits issued for the private lands surrounding the winter range sampling area could reflect rural homesite development. The number of septic permits issued by Flathead County in a buffer around the winter range was summarized for the years 1974 - 1997.

The implications of dogs running deer on their winter ranges are serious.

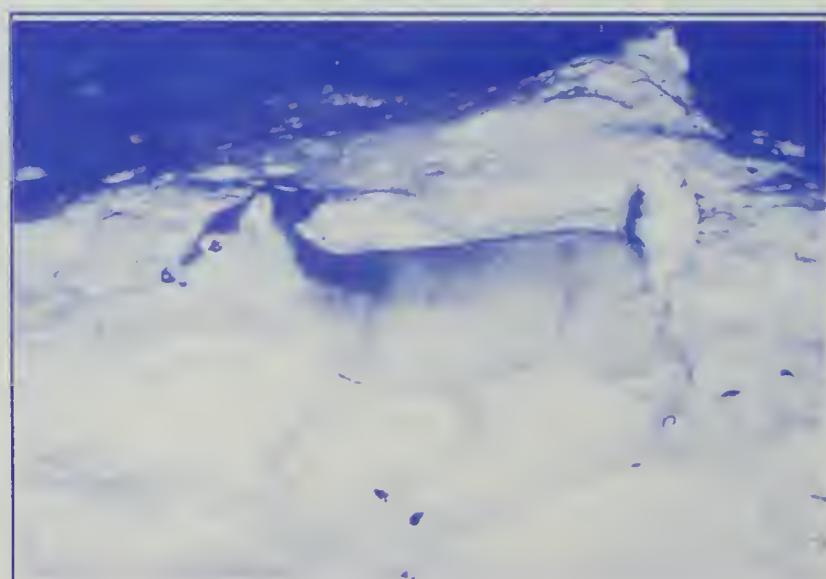
The number of septic permits issued varied annually, but the total number increased significantly through time. The average number issued per year increased from 3.2 in 1989-92 to 9.4 in 1993-97. Concurrently, the number of unique dogs photographed increased significantly between those same two time periods. The total number of different dogs photographed per year was strongly related to the cumulative number of septic permits in the buffer zone. Increasing the number of home sites increased the number of different dogs photographed. Over the years, 35 different dogs have been photographed.

Some dogs were photographed up to 2.5 kilometers from the nearest home site. Some dogs were explicitly photographed chasing deer. Interestingly, we never photographed a lion or other natural predator chasing deer during the same period, although we know it occurs. Individual dogs were photographed in multiple years and on multiple occasions within a single year. One dog in particular was photographed 6 different times at 5 different locations during the 15-day sampling period. Two of the locations were 3 kilometers apart. The majority of dogs wore collars (89%) and were photographed during daylight (66%).

The implications of dogs running deer on their winter ranges are serious. There could be indirect or direct mortality of deer due to dogs. Of greater importance to the population, however, is the chronic harassment of being chased. Deer overwinter survival strategies are based on energy conservation. The more time deer spend running, the less time they spend resting, feeding, or minimizing exposure to winter snows and cold temperatures, thus burning body fat reserves prematurely. Pet owners should not let their dogs run loose. Land use planners should be aware of the impacts of rural subdivision imposed by loose domestic pets, particularly when development takes place in the vicinity of critical wildlife habitats.

For more information on this issue, contact Carolyn at 752-5501.

THE CHASE. A fawn whitetail deer passes a remote camera during late winter in the Bowser Lake area. A few seconds later, two domestic dogs in close pursuit of the fawn are captured on film.



Fishing Can't Be Beat for Connecting Kids to Nature

FWP's Hooked on Fishing Program has proven to be one of the most popular youth education efforts ever undertaken by the agency. In northwest Montana, 1,200 students (mostly 4th graders) take part in this year-around fishing and aquatic education course.

Teachers make the program work. Over 50 classroom teachers in the region have incorporated Hooked on Fishing into their regular curricula throughout the school year. These teachers are paired with instructors for activities like

fish dissection, fish biology, aquatic insect studies, lure and fly making, fish identification and aquatic ecology. Students take about three fishing trips during the year to practice what they've learned.

Henry David Thoreau reveled in fishing on Walden Pond and eating his catch as part of experiencing nature. Based on the reaction of students in the Hooked on Fishing program, we think Thoreau was on to something. 



GETTING SET. Peterson School students surround fishing fanatic and Hooked On Fishing Instructor John Cloninger as they prepare to fish Buffalo Head Ponds.



IT'S A CATCH!
St. Matthews school students (left) celebrate a fine catch during a Hooked on Fishing excursion to Echo Lake.



SUCCESSFUL FISHING. Buffalo Head (below) and another pond, Drybridge (stocked with rainbow trout, above) became top fishing sites for Hooked on Fishing students and neighborhood kids. Says FWP Fisheries Manager Jim Vashro: "We hoped to establish sites where kids could walk or ride their bikes to good fishing. Both ponds have been great successes."



GIVE A CHILD a rod, hook and worm to enrich her view of nature.



STOCKING LESSON. Kids from Deer Park and Edgerton schools helped FWP stock cutthroat trout in Buffalo Head Ponds in Kalispell.



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Thanks to the Bait Lady!

Paula Griffith supplied worms and maggots for the Hooked on Fishing Program and gave great presentations on raising worms. Thanks, Paula!



CHECKING THEIR CATCH. Students from Edgerton School crowd around an aquarium to observe perch and crayfish they caught in Echo Lake.

Montana's Open Space

by Alan Wood, Wildlife Mitigation Coordinator

Montana, a land of open spaces and scenic splendor, captures our hearts and minds. These open spaces, this big sky, that expansive sense of grandeur, are why we love it here. Yes, "open space" means different things to different people (see sidebar). But no matter what your view, it's clearly vital to this place we call home. Our open spaces maintain a quality of life that is unequivocally treasured in Montana and throughout the west.

It's no secret, Montana has been rediscovered. Every year, our beautiful scenery, friendly people, and way of life attract ten times more visitors to the state than live here. Some choose to stay. Over 53,000 people moved here between 1990 and 1997. This growth has contributed to the loss of more than 3 million acres of productive land, an area the size of Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks combined.

It is not growth, by itself, that is the problem, but the type and location of that growth. Governor Racicot, in a speech at an open space conference in Bozeman, said: "I think we have to be very diligent or we are going to lose this opportunity to steer growth in a way that is acceptable to all of us. We have a long tradition in Montana of being closely connected to the landscape and I know well that Montanans need to feel there is a great expanse of geography available to them. That is part of who we are."

But why should we worry about growth here in northwest Montana? We have an abundance of open space in our public land base. State and National forest lands comprise 65% of Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, and Sanders Counties. Add to that the 10% that is corporate timberland, and you have three-fourths of the region that is currently open space and available for public recreation use.

The answer, as with the definition of open space itself, is different for each person. The 27% of this four-county region comprised of private and corporate land is important for a variety of reasons.



THE DANCING PRAIRIE RESERVE near Eureka is an excellent example of a successful effort to preserve wildlife Habitat and Open Space. This 680-acre conservation easement was purchased by FWP using mitigation dollars.

- **Open space provides** the necessary base that accommodates food and fiber production. Agriculture is a major contributor to the economy. Agricultural producers use the land and water resources in ways that insure an opportunity for future generations to continue those traditions and enjoy the benefits of the land. Our vast open spaces also attract tourists, sportsmen, and outdoor enthusiasts, boosting local and state economies.

- **In our forested northwest** region, timber is an important part of our economy. A 1996 timber supply study found that timber harvests from non-industrial, private forests play an increasingly important role in maintaining the wood supply to sawmills. The loss of large forested tracts can have a devastating impact on traditional forest practices and the maintenance of forest values. The sustainability of rural timber operations is at risk in part because loggers and saw mill owners face increased difficulties obtaining timber from smaller parcels of land with proliferating numbers of landowners.

- **Wildland fire suppression** in our urban-forest interface is becoming an increasing concern. Rural residential developments create increased

risks to life and property, increase fire suppression costs, and increased administrative costs of managing surrounding public and corporate lands.

- **Rural residential developments**, currently the most common alternative to working farms and forests, also represent an increased tax burden on all of us. A recent study in Flathead County showed that for every dollar residential property pays into local government coffers, it demands \$1.23 in governmental services. Conversely, even though the tax rate is much less on agricultural, timber and open lands, they require only \$0.34 in governmental services for every dollar they contribute. Each home on outlying rural lands means more pressure for increased property taxes on all of us.

- **Rural development can** negatively impact important fish and wildlife habitat. Even with lots of public land, many fish and wildlife populations still depend on private lands for their existence. Most public lands are located at higher elevations, whereas, the lower, more productive areas are privately owned. Consequently, private lands are crucial to migratory species such as deer, elk, bull trout and cutthroat trout.

Montana's Open Space

There are many different tools available to help us protect our most important open spaces.

The 1999 legislature debated a number of bills aimed at encouraging smart community growth, revising subdivision laws, and tax breaks and incentives so agricultural producers can stay in business. They also passed the Montana Agricultural Heritage Act, a bill that allows the state to acquire conservation easements from willing sellers and donors to main-

tain natural and public values and help family farms, ranches and forests keep working.

Conservation easements have been used to help protect Montana's rural landscape since 1977. A conservation easement is a legal means that allows land to remain in private ownership while ensuring that natural resource values of the land will not be compromised by incompatible development. There are several active programs, both state and private, that work with conservation easements.

In summary, open space is a lot of what the prairies, forests and mountain valleys of Montana are all about. It provides important fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and scenic values, not to mention the economic benefits from prudent use of our natural resources. If we're going to successfully protect this special land, our lifestyle and the attributes of our region, we must work together to maintain open space, our most valuable, long-term, natural resource.

Defining Open Space

Open space means different things to different people. It is our personal relationship with open space that makes it important. Open space may have economic and market value, but it also has social, cultural, and spiritual values.

Open space can be defined as follows:

- That quality of place that provides people with a sense of freedom;
- Land largely free of residential and industrial development;
- Land which maintains rural character, wildlife habitat, impressive viewscapes, and access to recreation; or
- Land which is in agricultural use, such as ranching or farming.

Cynthia M. Lummis, editor

Ways to Conserve Wyoming's Wonderful Open Lands, June 1997

Thank You!

Trapper Education Instructor Gary Wilson and his wife Sue want to thank everyone who helped so generously with contributions to the family's medical bills for their son, Andy.

Andy's heart condition is improving, and he looks forward to a full recovery.



McKay Landing Site Completed

The McKay Landing fishing access site has been completed on the Clark Fork River in Sanders County. The Eastern Sanders County Sportsmen Club was instrumental in gaining the original easement donated by the late Jerome McKay. The access is located 16 miles west of Plains on the south side of the river.

George Smith and Fred Cavill helped to install the access sign. Fred was instrumental in securing the original easement. Credit is due to the sportsmen club for their perseverance and patience in obtaining funding for the project.



PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF. George Smith and Fred Cavill have helped establish the McKay Landing fishing access site west of Plains.

Forest Expo Shows Responsible Forest Uses

The annual Family Forestry Expo held in May on F. H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company land near Columbia Falls illustrates compatible and responsible forest uses. During the week about 1,200 5th graders from across northwest Montana tour the site and learn about forestry, fisheries, wildlife, fire, backcountry camping, and

other subjects. The tours emphasize hands-on learning and take place in a forest/stream setting.

During the weekend, families visit the Expo and have the opportunity to tour the forest walk sites as well as view actual logging demonstrations and a logger sports show. About 1,500

people attended the weekend Expo this year.

The Expo shows that people from diverse backgrounds and vocations can work together to educate about a common goal: responsible natural resource use. F. H. Stoltze deserves a big thank you from the public for sponsoring the event. 

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE. A young weekend Expo visitor handles a brook trout sampled from Trumble Creek at the fisheries station. The fisheries station is located along the creek and featured an underwater camera to give visitors a "fish eye's view."



SHARING THE BASICS (left). Instructors from various agencies and companies explain forest management principles to students during the week.

HELPFUL HOST. F.H. Stoltze has hosted the Expo on their land for nearly a decade. Stoltze has a general policy which allows responsible public access to their land



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**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

Dan Vincent, Supervisor
Harvey Nyberg, Wildlife Manager
Jim Vashro, Fisheries Manager
Marty Watkins, Parks Manager
Ed Kelly, Warden Captain
Noemí Barta, Office Manager
Brian Marotz, Fisheries Mitigation Coordinator
Alan Wood, Wildlife Mitigation Coordinator
John Fraley, Information Officer, Newsletter Editor

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